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homemakers' chat
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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Thursday, September 18, 1941.

QUESTION BOX
Crickets harmful?
Suggestions for egg and milk dishes?
Are red lines on bacon wrappers legal?

Answers from:
Entomologists, meat inspectors, and home economists of the U.S.Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

Crickets chirp on the hearth in September and October, and in our question box today is a letter from a woman who wants to know if these cheery little insects do any harm in the house. Another writer asks about economical egg and milk dishes. And a third has a complaint about deceptive bacon wrappers. We've asked the scientists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture to help answer all these questions.

"Please tell me if crickets bite people or damage fabrics or clothing. We have found an number of them around the house lately. Should we get rid of them?" So writes our first correspondent.

By all means get rid of any crickets indoors, answer the entomologists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Crickets do not hurt people, but they can do a great deal of damage to household articles. They seem particularly fond of clothing and table linen -- all the better if soiled. Two or three crickets in the house may soon become forty or fifty.

Normally the ordinary field crickets are not household pests. They often live and breed in trash dumps, where they find plenty of hiding places and plenty of food through the summer. As food becomes less abundant at the end of the warm season, the crickets come out and head for nearby houses. They get in through the basement and crawl up along walls and around pipes to the upper stories. They eat holes in all the cloth they can reach. For example, in no time, they will riddle clothing left on the floor. They seem to have a special fondness for rayon or silk

garments, and sweaters. They may gnaw the bindings of books and cut holes in wall paper.

Swat any crickets you find with a fly swatter or squirt fly spray over them. Scatter fresh pyrethrum powder along baseboards. Or use a poison bait. You can make a good poison bait from this formula: One pound of bran, 4/5 of an ounce of sodium fluosilicate, 5 tablespoons of molasses, and one pint of water. (Repeat). Scatter this bait around the cellar where the crickets come in. But take care to keep it away from children and chickens.

We turn from crickets to cooking. A woman writes: "I would appreciate some information on economical dishes using eggs and milk."

The answer to this letter is in 2 free publications of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, containing egg and milk recipes. One is Farmers' Bulletin 1705, called Milk for the Family; the other is Leaflet 39, Eggs at Any Meal. There is also a collection of recipes entitled "Egg Dishes at Low Cost". Many of the appetizing and inexpensive egg dishes included in this leaflet are made with eggs and milk. Anyone else who wants egg and milk recipes is welcome to them. Just write to the U. S. Department of Agriculture at Washington, D. C.

At this time of year eggs in home flocks are fewer, and eggs in stores are higher in price. Nevertheless, an all-egg dinner or supper is a relatively low-cost meal, high in food value. Such main dishes as omelet, scrambled eggs, baked eggs, creamed eggs with fish, or cheese fondue, require about one egg per person and help use the week's quota of eggs. This is especially valuable if no eggs are served for breakfast.

For desserts when eggs are scarce and high, you can economize by making combination dishes that do not call for quite so many eggs as you would use in the early spring. But remember, always, that the more eggs in any dish, the better, as far as

nourishment is concerned. Just now you can make custard creams partly thickened with flour or cornstarch, and use only about half as many eggs as in an all-egg custard. You can make bread pudding, or cabinet pudding using stale cake, or make rice pudding with eggs in it. When eggs are again cheap and plentiful, you can turn to the desserts that call for a larger number of eggs -- fruit whips and souffles, soft and baked custards, sponge cake and angel food.

When you have a rather small amount of meat or fish for the main dish you can make eggs help you to improve the food values of the meal. Serve a side dish containing eggs. If you serve corn pudding, or egg spoon bread, or egg toast -- maybe you call it "French toast" -- you don't need any other starchy food at the same meal except bread.

Last question: "I bought a pound of bacon in a package that looked all right in the store, but when I unwrapped it at home, I found it wasn't 'well-streaked' at all, but that the wrapping paper simply had red lines on it. Isn't there some way of stopping such deceptions?"

Yes, there certainly is, says the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Transparent wrappers or other transparent coverings for sliced bacon or similar sliced meat or fresh sausage shall not, according to a recently issued meat inspection rule of the Department, bear parallel lines, serially repeated figures, or similar designs, in any shade of red, whether such decorations wholly or but partially cover the contents of the package. This ruling goes into effect October 1, 1941, at all establishments where Federal meat inspection is maintained. The mark of Federal inspection will be found to be part of the label in each case. It furnishes assurance that the animal from which the meat came was healthy and that the meat was handled entirely under the scrutiny of a Federal inspector up to the time the meat or product was transported from the establishment.

With this assurance we'll stop for today.